

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3864
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, GE
SUBJECT: HONECKER'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

1. IN A TRADITIONAL NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE TO THE GDR
POPULATION, SED GENERAL SECRETARY ERICH HONECKER
TOUCHED ON THE USUAL THEMES, INCLUDING FRG-GDR
RELATIONS AND THE GDR ECONOMY. ON THE FRG, HONECKER
WARNS THAT INCREASING "PROVOCATIONS" FROM THE FRG AGAINST
THE BOUNDARIES OF THE GDR NECESSARILY BURDEN FRG-GDR
RELATIONS. HE NOTES THAT THE GDR " HAS MADE ENOUGH
PROPOSALS" FOR NORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE FRG AND IS
PREPARED IN THE FUTURE TO REACT POSITIVELY TO
REALISTIC STEPS BY THE FRG. HONECKER EMPHASIZES,
HOWEVER, THAT THE PRECONDITION FOR COOPERATION MUST
BE THE ACCEPTANCE OF TWO INDEPENDENT, SOVEREIGN
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GERMAN STATES.

2. HONECKER'S DISCUSSION OF THE GDR'S ECONOMIC
PROSPECTS IS SOBER. CALLING THE FIVE-YEAR
PLAN GOALS " EXACTING", HONECKER ADMITS FOR THE FIRST
TIME OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE THAT WESTERN ECONOMIC
DIFFICULTIES HAVE CREATED PROBLEMS FOR THE GDR

ECONOMY, AND SAYS IN ADDITION, THAT SURVIVALS OF CAPITALISM REMAIN TO BE OVERCOME.

3. COMMENT: HONECKER'S REMARKS ON RELATIONS WITH THE FRG APPEAR DESIGNED TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THE GDR IS INTERESTED IN CONTINUED NORMALIZATION WITH THE FRG IN SPITE OF THE GDR'S NEGATIVE REACTION TO SCHMIDT'S GOVERNMENTAL DECLARATION AND THE RECENT EXPULSION OF FRG TELEVISION CORRESPONDENT LOTHAR LOEWE. HIS STATEMENT THAT THE GDR HAS MADE "ENOUGH PROPOSALS" FOR NORMAL RELATIONS MAY INDICATE, HOWEVER, THAT NO NEW INITIATIVES CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE GDR SIDE FOR THE TIME BEING.

4. HONECKER'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE CONTAINS THE MOST OPEN ADMISSION WE HAVE SEEN TO DATE THAT THE GDR ECONOMY IS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES AS THE FIVE-YEAR PLAN GOES INTO ITS SECOND YEAR. IN RECENT SPEECHES, HONECKER HAS STRESSED THE NECESSITY OF PREVENTING THE WESTERN ECONOMIC CRISIS FROM AFFECTING THE GDR. NOW HE ADMITS THAT THE GDR ECONOMY HAS ALREADY BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED, AND HIS ASSERTION THAT SURVIVALS OF CAPITALISM PLAQUE THE GDR ECONOMY REVIVES A THEME WE HAVE NOT SEEN ADDRESSED AT THE PARTY CHIEF LEVEL IN THE EMBASSY'S TWO YEARS HERE. HONECKER THUS BLAMES CAPITALISM, PAST AND PRESENT, FOR THE GDR'S PROBLEMS, BUT IN SO DOING ACKNOWLEDGES MORE EXPLICITLY THAN HERETOFORE THAT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS WORRISOME TO THE LEADERSHIP.
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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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